Financial steps

11. Financial and technical help is provided to the States under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, *viz.* Project Tiger and Integrated Development of Wildlife habitats for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure of the States for providing effective protection to wild animals.

International Cooperation

12. India has a Memorandum of Understanding with Nepal on controlling trans-boundary illegal trade in wildlife and conservation, apart from a protocol on tiger conservation with China.

13. A Global Tiger Forum of Tiger Range Countries has been created for addressing international issues related to tiger conservation.

14. During the 14th meeting of the Conference of Parties to CITES, which was held from 3rd to 15th June, 2007 at the Hague, India introduced a resolution along with China, Nepal and the Russian Federation, with directions to Parties with operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale, for restricting such captive populations to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers. The resolution was adopted as a decision with minor amendments. Further, India made an intervention appealing to China to phase out tiger farming, and eliminate stockpiles os Asian big cats body parts and derivatives. The importance of continuing the ban on trade of body parts of tigers was emphasized.

Reintroduction of Tigers in Sariska Tiger Reserve

15. A male tiger and a tigress have been reintroduced in the Sariska Tiger Reserve (Rajasthan), based on a recovery strategy suggested by the Wildlife Institute of India. The tigers are being closely monitored by radio telemetry.

Creation of Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF)

16. The policy initiatives announced by the Finance Minister in his Budget Speech of 29.2.2008, *inter-alia*, contains action points relating to tiger protection. Based on the one time grant of Rs. 50.00 crore provided to the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) for raising, arming and deploying a Special Tiger Protection Force, the proposal for the said force has been approved by the competent authority for 13 tiger reserves. Advisory has been sent to Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand for initiating steps for deploying in Dudhwa, Ranthambhore and Corbett tiger reserves, with 100% Central assistance during the current financial year.

Conservation of natural resources

426. SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken up any plan towards conservation of natural water bodies, forests, stone hills, rivers from affects caused by industrialization and other construction works;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) The Ministry is implementing the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of National Lake Conservation Plan and National Wetlands Conservation Programme for the conservation and management of natural water bodies such as lakes and wetlands in the country. The objectives of the two schemes are to conserve polluted and degraded lakes and wetlands in the country.

To check pollution in rivers and to improve their quality through different pollution abatement measures, National River Conservation Plan is also under implementation in the towns along the identified polluted stretches of rivers. In case of forests, mitigative measures are stipulated under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, to avoid the ill effects of diversion of forest lands on the natural resources like water bodies, hills, rivers etc.

The Government has also notified certain developmental projects including industrial and construction activities which could be taken up only after prior environmental clearance under environmental regulations such as Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification and Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

Tiger population

427. SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of tigers, State-wise;

(b) whether it is a fact that the population of tigers in India has reduced to fifty per cent;

(c) if so, the details and the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to protect and increase the population of tigers in Manas Reserve in Assam which is reported to be declining due to deforestation and rapid human settlement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) The population estimates of tiger as per the recent refined All India tiger estimation carried out by Project Tiger (National Tiger Conservation Authority), in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India are given in the statement. [Refer to the statement appended to the answer to unstarred question 425 Part (a) and (b)]

(b) and (c) As per the findings of the recent all India estimation of tiger using the refined methodology, the total country-level population of tiger is 1411 (mid value); the lower and upper limits being 1165 and 1657 respectively. The recent assessment of tiger population is based on determining spatial occupancy of tigers throughout potential tiger forests and sampling such